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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE FOREST SERVICE

History Line

1876 1971

TO: History Coordinators
Forest Service Personnel

1680
FALL--September 15, 1972

Issued by the History Branch, Information and Education Division
Washington, D.C., Room 3034-S Bldg., Phone (202) 44-72418

The History of Information and Education in the Forest Service is one of those intriguing stories that has never been adequately told. I&E, as it is now called, began, informally at least, when Gifford Pinchot came to head the Division of Forestry in the Department of Agriculture in 1898, for Pinchot was himself, among other things, a talented PR man. The I&E activity originated at about the same time or before the emergence of the Public Relations profession in America.

In this, as in so many other directions, the Forest Service was a pioneer, out in front! The first government PR office was opened by the Marine Corps in Chicago in 1908. In the 1890's, a few industries and corporations began to open public relations offices. The Forest Service public relations activity was called public relations up until 1920. Adding to the interest of this story is the fact that the Forest Service activity has been headed by outstanding and colorful PR professionals--Tom Gill and Clint Davis--for example.

It is interesting to note the I&E activity emerged from the editorial function in the Chief's Office. And that was handled originally, and for a long career by Gifford Pinchot's friend and classmate from Yale, Herbert A. (Dolly) Smith.

Information and Education, of course, is only one of 28 Divisions in the WO, and each has an equally interesting historical background--a story that can and should be written, in order to tie-in with projects already underway, and generally aiming toward the FS centennial in 1976. We hope each Division Director is thinking along this line, and has, or will set up, a Division History file, and have someone look after it, at least part time. This is also applicable to every organizational unit in the Forest Service! If documents and records are stored somewhere, a knowledgable researcher can piece together the story, but the human memory simply is not adequate to remember some details of an event after only a few weeks have passed, to say nothing of a few years! Every WO Division has a stake in the History program.

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And while the History Branch has received fine cooperation and sometimes suggestions, the responsibility goes farther than that. The very small History Office is quite limited in what it can do for a particular Division. Finally, it comes down to a responsibility to your own Division.

We have the message: FIELD offices need guidance and direction. We have been aware of this all along, but the pressure of things that had to be done has delayed the 1680 Directive. It is on its way. All efforts will be made to have it in your hands by the end of '72! Considerable progress is being made in FS history, and this issue will bring you up-to-date on projects underway from the WO.

In order to tie-in with on-going projects, and for other good and sound reasons, all Forest Service units--National Forests, Experiment Stations, and Laboratories--should ORGANIZE AND GET THEIR HISTORIES WRITTEN, if at all possible. Of course, some units have already done this, and have them published, since we have copies on hand. But the percentage of such published histories is comparatively small!

This is significant for the following reasons:

1. To provide information for management plans, impact reports, surveys, inventories, and other official documents that require historical information to clarify current problems, objectives, or policies.

2. To provide information for in-Service use--to acquaint employees with the organization's history, giving them a sense of perspective, identification, tradition, and understanding.

3. To assist the preparation of interpretative information for forest visitors, primarily through the Visitor Information Services program.

4. To aid persons doing historical research on land management questions, such as local application of a national policy.

5. To answer numerous requests from the public about the history of the forest or unit.

When the current history effort was in its infancy, March 1971, we were able to have a highly capable man from the FIELD come to the WO on a three-week detail. Samuel T. Frear, Information officer of the Willamette National Forest, Oregon, with an M.A. in history, came and gave us a good start, including a 12-page paper which he produced. Since then, we have from time to time drawn on his paper for guidance. The following paragraphs are from that paper:

"There is importance in having each organizational unit of the Forest Service, including National Forests, Experiment Stations, and laboratories research, organize, and write their histories. This has significance for the following reasons:

"There is a general misconception about history, particularly in regard to local history. It generally is thought of as a collection of anything that is old. History buffs abound--frequently they are dilettantes, puttering around without direction or goals. Too many local histories are collections of assorted documents and stories that appear to have been gathered at random, many unverified and patently apocryphal, resulting in a mish-mash of fact, quasi-fact, rumor, myth, and outright distortions of truth. As in many areas, there are people wanting to work in the historical field without being willing to pay the price necessary for a job well done. Researching and writing of a history is a discipline. A person undertaking it should first acquire a good general knowledge of the regional history, he should be thorough in his researching, he must have patience to sort through many kinds of material, and he must combine a lively curiosity with a trace of skepticism. Above all, he must be determined.

"The goal of forest history usually will not be to produce a work of historical scholarship, combining intensive knowledge, thorough research, analyses, and interpretation. Instead, a forest history needs to include the basic material to give the user a reasonable degree of certainty that the facts are correct, and represent the basic story of the subject. The goals of the project will determine if additional detail is necessary.

Historical Perspectives

"In researching and writing a Forest Service history, it is important to keep in mind historical perspective. Regarding a National Forest, for example, it is possible to view it:

1. As a history of the National Forest itself.

2. As a history of the National Forest in relation to a specific area such as a section of the state or of a geographic region.

3. As a study of the implementation of national laws and policies on a local administrative level.

4. As a history of forestry in general.

Therefore, it is important for the history project to initially adopt a point of view desired to be covered. There may be more than one point of view, and they need not be mutually exclusive. It is important to recognize the perspectives in order to be able to organize the research. If not, there is a possibility of research taking off in many directions. It is literally possible to research a subject forever if the perspective continually broadens while the project goes on."

History Line now on Regular Schedule: Henceforth, it will be issued quarterly, as follows: Spring, March 15; Summer, June 15; Fall, September 15; Winter, December 15. Heretofore, no regular schedule has been attempted because it was on something of a trial basis. Now, we feel that it will serve a more

useful purpose if a regular schedule is maintained. It has done what we hoped it would do, that is, generate interest in FS history and serve as a line of communication between the WO History Branch and FIELD coordinators and units.

National Forest Histories and Manuscripts on Hand in WO History Office: Clear Water, Flathead, Monongahela, Nezperce, Ozark, Payette, Pisgah, Rogue, Sawtooth, White Mountain; Bound historical notes on the Superior and Chippewa; Written Report on the Guayule Rubber Project, a bound Report of the U.S. Forest Service Programs Resulting from the New England Hurricane of 1938, Bibliography of Great Plains Forestry by Ralph A. Read, May 1961, Pioneer Days in the Forest Service, several hundred pages of excerpts from "Old Timer" letters; Chief's Reports from 1894, The Use Book, dating back to 1906. We have a four-volume typed manuscript on the history of Region 3. A History of the Alaska Region has been written by historian Dr. Lawrence Rakestraw--now in the editorial review process in the WO. A History of the Forest Products Laboratory, 1963, by Charles A. Nelson, M.A. in American History, University of Wisconsin, now working on Ph.D., same institution.

The History Branch this past summer was fortunate in acquiring the services of an outstanding summer student, Miss D'Ann Campbell, A.B. in history from the University of Colorado, at Colorado Springs, who graduated with Distinction in History, Summa Cum Laude, and a Phi Beta Cappa! As we expected, she did fine work for the History Office. She wrote a condensed history of the Forest Service, which we expect to publish as soon as it can be edited and processed, and in addition worked with Jay McConnell, on the computerized information retrieval system. A conscientious, dedicated student of history, she has moved on to graduate work at the University of North Carolina. We hope that she got a sufficient taste of FS history and research opportunities therein to return to the subject for her graduate degree.

Recent History of FS History Program: Stirrings of interest in the agency's history, that led to the present program, began under former Chief Richard E. McArdle in 1960, when Arthur Carhart started the Conservation Library (now part of the Denver Public Library) and came to Washington to meet with the Chief and Clint Davis about it. He got an agreement from the Chief to begin sending copies of speeches and other documents to the Conservation Library. A question about this arose recently and we were able to ascertain that, with one exception, no original documents ever went to the Conservation Library, only copies. The exception was old newspaper clippings of Forest Service stories, from 1890 to 1935: 23 cubic feet or 750 pounds of them, and several hundred old diaries by early day Rangers. These were given to the Conservation Library, and represent a possible gold mine for some historian interested in how the Forest Service rated in the news media of those years.

Following the Carhart visit, Info Specialist Robert D. King, Press & Writing Branch, I&E, was assigned the duty of beginning a history file in the Division, and at about this time Gordon Fox, Associate Deputy for Administration, was named to head an ad-hoc history committee.

Among those serving on the ad-hoc committee were Fred Grover, John Prokop, Cliff Owsley, Bob Buckman, Phil Thornton, Glenn Todd, Mike Howlett, Chet Shields, Nolan O'Neal and Hob Howard.

In 1965, Elwood Maunder, of the Forest History Society, and Amelia Frye, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, met with the ad-hoc history committee, and at about the same time Mr. Maunder wrote an "Overview of FS History."

In April 1968, Henry W. (Hank) DeBruin became Division Director of Information and Education and through a reorganization in the Division, gave another push toward a formal history effort.

Former Chief Edward P. Cliff, who had long had an interest in Service history, sent to the Field the first memorandum regarding history. Dated September 11, 1968, it called for a greater effort, "Service-wide, to compile, interpret, and preserve the essential elements of Forest Service history."

The Memorandum announcing formal establishment of a History activity is dated August 24, 1970. Also signed by former Chief Cliff, it said, "I am pleased to let you know that we have formally established a Forest Service history activity, which will involve a modest beginning on an organized history program for the Service."

Another milestone was a Co-op Agreement of 2/25/71 with the Forest History Society to do six oral taped interviews with former Service officials: Frederick W. Grover, Edward C. Crafts, Earl S. Peirce, Hamilton K. Pyles, Dr. V. L. Harper, J. Herbert Stone, and Lloyd Swift.

Status Report on Current History Projects:

1. Comprehensive History of the Forest Service, a book under cooperative agreement with the Forest History Society, Santa Cruz, Calif., for the next three years, 1972-1975. The goal is to have the manuscript completed in early '75, and publish the book by early '76, in order to celebrate the Forest Service Centennial in conjunction with the Bi-Centennial of the United States. Woody Maunder, Executive Director of FHS, reports that Historian Dr. Harold Steen, Assistant Director of FHS, began this past summer researching and gathering material in the FHS's library and in California, and soon is to move on to the Washington area to explore National Archives and Library of Congress, WO, and vicinity.

2. History of Forestry in the Great Plains (Shelterbelt), under cooperative agreement with Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas. Project historian is Dr. Wilmon H. Droze, Adjunct Professor of History and Political Science, and author of High Dams and Slack Waters (TVA Rebuilds a River), 1965. Research is moving on schedule, Dr. Droze reports. The project is to culminate in a published book by June 30, 1973.

3. A Bibliography of Forest Service and Forestry in the U.S., under cooperative agreement with Forest History Society. Ultimately to include published and unpublished private reference sources. However, first increment is a bound bibliography of published references and source material, due June 30, 1973. Later requirements are for listings of major private collection of documents or papers relating to the Forest Service. FHS reports project on schedule, and already more than 3,000 references listed. A special feature of this bibliography is that it is computerized, a part of the FAMULUS program at Berkeley, and can be utilized here in the WO. With the completion of this project, no historian wishing to delve into FS history will lack guidance in named reference sources and their location--an invaluable tool for the researcher, and should further encourage and aid writing of the agency's full history.

4. Six Oral Taped Interviews and bound typescripts of same on Multiple Use in U.S. Forest Service Land Planning with these former FS leaders: Dr. V. L. Harper, retired Deputy Chief for Research, Hamilton K. Pyles, former Deputy Chief for Legislative Affairs, Earl S. Peirce, Frederick W. Grover, and Edward C. Crafts. This project, the first one administered by the History Office, is complete.

5. This Way to Wilderness, a personal narrative in book form by Arthur H. Carhart, Lemon Grove, Calif., of the role he and other FS officials played in the origin and development of the Wilderness concept on the National Forests and in America. Manuscript nearing completion, with 125,000 words written, and Carhart says, will be a 150,000-word book.

From these projects, and particularly the History of the Forest Service, it is obvious that a history of a particular National Forest already written and published is more apt to be drawn on by the researchers than would be the case if they had to dig it up. However, it is not known here at this point just how much detail, for example of a particular National Forest, may be used. Yet, at the Forest and Regional level, such published histories no doubt will be highly useful in any celebration activities marking a Century of Federal Forestry in 1976.

Clare Hendee, retired Deputy Chief of Administration, has written a brief history of the Job Corps from his intimate knowledge of how it all began and developed. It will be duplicated and copies made available to all those interested. This voluntary contribution to Job Corps history is greatly appreciated by the History Office.

Dr. Donald N. Baldwin, of Denver, who wrote his doctorial dissertation on the Origin and Development of the Wilderness concept on the National Forest, died of a heart attack September 25--a knowledgable and dedicated friend to the Wilderness idea! He made a valuable contribution to the history of Wilderness. His book is to be published within about a month, and the History Office has been promised a copy.

Forestry '76 Bookmark, just off the press, has the distinction of being the first promotion piece on the Forest Service Centennial fast coming up for 1976, coinciding with the Bicentennial of the Nation. Initial shipments of the red, white, and blue bookmark have already been made directly from GPO to FS offices. George Vitas, Chief of Visitor Information Services, is the man behind the bookmark. It has a tie-in with the Bicentennial of the country, and probably reaps another distinction for the Forest Service, the first piece commemorating the Bicentennial issued by a government agency! The little bookmark is already doing its work. It serves as an excellent vehicle to re-emphasize a point in Forest Service History: Whatever you plan to do in FS history aimed at '76, it is by no means too early to start thinking and planning! About three years stand between us and '76. It's later than we think!

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